

At approximately 12 p.m. on April 10, 1912, the new Royal Mail Steamer [Titanic](#), flagship of the White Star Line, cast off from Southampton, England, on her maiden voyage to New York. She stopped at Cherbourg, France, and Queenstown (now Cobh), Ireland, picking up additional passengers and mail, as well to debark cross-channel passengers.

Steaming west from Queenstown, she carried 2,208 passengers and crew - an eclectic mixture of Edwardian society. From the affluent first class, the likes of [Astor](#), [Straus](#) and [Guggenheim](#), to the largely forgotten third class and crew, with names such as [Kirkham](#), [Sage](#) and [Ward](#) - each with their own unique story to tell.

*Titanic's* speed had been steadily increasing during the voyage as additional boilers were brought online, and on Sunday, April 14, the vessel was making approximately 21.5 knots. Throughout the day and into the night the temperature outside had been falling until some time shortly before the collision when it dipped below the freezing point.

At 11:40 p.m. [Frederick Fleet](#), one of the lookouts stationed in the [crow's nest](#), noticed something in the distance. He rang the warning bell three times, signalling the [bridge](#) of an object directly ahead, and picked up the bridge-crow's-nest telephone. A terse exchange over the telephone effectively warned the bridge of the impending danger, however, the warning had come too late to avert a collision.

First Officer [William Murdoch](#) was entering the bridge from the starboard wing when the warning came and quickly ordered the ship's helm turned hard astarboard. He was hoping to maneuver *Titanic's* bow away from the danger, then attempt to work the stern around but the iceberg was too close. The ship brushed along a submerged spar of the iceberg along her starboard side, opening several varying sized holes along her length an inrush of water.

[Thomas Andrews](#), the ship's designer from Harland and Wolff, informed [Captain Smith](#) that the pumps were incapable of keeping up with the amount of water entering the vessel and would only buy them some extra time. The crew began hastily uncovering and readying the lifeboats to evacuate the vessel. Being aware there was barely enough lifeboat accommodation for slightly more than half of those on board must have weighed heavily on the captain's mind.

At 2:20 a.m., two hours and forty minutes after the collision, the vessel broke in two and sank, taking with her over 1,500 lives.

The Cunard Company's steamship [Carpathia](#) arrived on the disaster scene

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shortly after 4 in the morning. Her captain, [Arthur Henry Rostron](#), expected to see *Titanic*, but was instead confronted with a lone green light, lying low on the water, one of *Titanic* boats.

As daylight crept over the disaster area, lifeboat after lifeboat was sighted as they closed in on the *Carpathia*'s position. The following hours were expended embarking the survivors and retrieving what little remained of *Titanic*, her boats.

Shortly after sunrise the Leyland steamer [Californian](#), commanded by Captain [Stanley Lord](#), arrived. Rostron requested that the *Californian* continue searching the area for any survivors. He then turned *Carpathia* west and steamed for New York with 705 survivors.

The world that morning began hearing news of the collision. Early stories of the disaster were often rushed and erroneous, relying on fragmented information coming from various stations listening to the tragedy unfold.

*Carpathia* hadn't helped matters very much. Her Marconi operator, [Harold Cottam](#), along with [Harold Bride](#) from *Titanic*, began sending out lists of survivors and ignored requests for details of the disaster. During the following days question followed question with very few answers forthcoming. Both in America and England pressure rapidly built to determine the factors leading to this disaster.

This site contains the complete transcripts of both the US Senate and British Board of Trade inquiries into the disaster, along with their final reports.

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Project Coordination /

Site Compilation:

*Rob Ottmers*

Transcript editing /

corrections:

*Bill Wormstedt / Rob Ottmers*

Website Design:

*Romy Olkon-Larsen*